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Poetry.

FOR THE OXFORD DEMOCRAT.
Let Not Your Hope Be Dead.

When winter winds are sighing,
And snow-clouds cling to earth;
When day from life is flying,
And death in life hath birth;
When storms and night will hover
Around the path you tread,
And all looks blank and cheerless,
Let not your Hope be dead!

When life is full of sorrow,
Its highway rough and steep;
When darkly looms to-morrow,
Where'er the eye may sweep;
When friends are few and friendly,
And foes their say have said;
When earth and heaven desert you,
Let not your Hope be dead!

The winter winds' sad sighing,
Will melt in spring's refrain;
The leaves of joy now dying,
In summer bloom again;
The murky night now brooding,
Shall soon have daylight shed;
The change will come with blessing,
Let not your Hope be dead!

The sun and moon may perish,
The stars and flowers may fade;
The things of time we cherish,
Return to death's dark shade;
But hope must live to aid us,
Firm set in heart and head,
The hope that sounds this watchword—
Let not your Hope be dead.

—William Brunton.

Selected Story.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

She landed at the one hotel in our quiet village, on a Saturday morning. We noticed her particularly because she was alone, because she was a stranger, and because she was very pretty. She appeared to be a young lady of two or three-and-twenty, slightly above the medium size, of perfect form,—that is, if you can admit that perfect form and vigor may go with perfect form— with large piercing black eyes, and a wealth of tresses floating over her shoulders. She was habited in a neat and convenient traveling dress, and as she stepped from the stage-coach to the piazza her movements were supple, though a little cramped by her long ride. A large canvas covered trunk followed her into the hall, after she had been shown into the parlor, the register with pen and ink, was brought for her signature. She nodded pleasantly—nodded with a smile that captivated the impossible clerk—and then in a very pretty Italian hand, wrote her name—Miss Clara Dubois, Philadelphia, Pa.

Later as the landlady politely escorted her to the supper-rooms, she informed him that she had heard of his house—that it was quiet and well-kept, and that she had come for a short rest and respite from the din and turmoil of the great city. And then with the sweetest smile imaginable, she added:

"As I am alone, and a stranger, I ought perhaps, to say just a word of myself. My mother is not living. My father and I have lately returned from a European tour, and I have sought this quiet retreat while he is preparing our house in Philadelphia. If he can leave his business here may, in the course of a few weeks, come up after me."

The good host was grateful for the information, and very glad the young lady had honored his house with her presence. He would do what he could to make her stay pleasant and agreeable.

Very soon Miss Dubois became acquainted with the guests of the house, and proved herself as intelligent and entertaining as she was pretty. She played well upon the piano-forte, but did not sing. She played chess, too, though there was only one party in the house to play it with her.

The days passed on and Miss Dubois walked much in and about the village. She seemed much interested in the place, and spoke favorably of all she saw. Her usual walking-habit was a dress of black silk, and a jaunty Swiss hat, and very few met her on the street who did not turn to take a second view.

Boarding at the hotel was Mr. Aaron Huntley. He kept the principal store in the village, and was also our postmaster. He was a man of five-and-forty, round and good-looking, and had been a widower ten years. He was a tender-hearted man, albeit a little self-sufficient and important; but he was unimpeachable and gallant, and he could unbend to the softest. In fact, he quietly enjoyed what he conceived to be his power over the marriageable young ladies of the place; and a certain power he certainly did possess, for in addition to his passably good looks, he was wealthy—that is, wealthy, as compared with other people in the village. He had been a successful trader, and he had been careful of his money, which he worshipped.

And it was Mr. Huntley who played chess with Miss Dubois. He was a very fair player, and she was skillful. Sometimes he came off winner, though it is doubtful if he realized that his occasional victory was through the kind suffering of his fair antagonist. And so the village store-keeper and the pretty visitor became warm friends, and it came at length that almost every evening found them at the chess-board.

Let it not be thought that Mr. Huntley was the only man who sought the society of Miss Dubois. A score, at least, of the young men of the village were very attentive. She was kind and gracious to all, but she plainly showed that the

substantial merchant was her favorite. With him she went to picnic, and with him she went to church, where she was among the most devout of the worshippers.

Yes, she was certainly fond of the company of Mr. Huntley, and it is not to be wondered at that he should become fond of her. She was pretty, she was witty, she was intelligent, and she had strong common sense; and, furthermore, she was young and buoyant. What more could he ask in a wife? If he thought of dower, her conversation of herself had convinced him that her father was wealthy.

One evening Aaron Huntley came from the parlor, where he had been playing chess, radiant. He had proposed and been accepted. He managed to keep the secret, blessed secret for twenty-four hours, and then he let it out to the landlady, and was congratulated. The store-keeper was happy. He walked as one on air. He was smiling and gracious to his customers and even generous.

"Of course," whispered Clara, with her head on Mr. Huntley's shoulder, "we cannot be married until my father comes. I have written to him, and told him all."

Yes—he knew she had written, for on that very day he had mailed the letter, addressed to "Col. Charles A. Dubois, Philadelphia, Pa."

"And," pursued Clara, with emotion, "I know he will like you. He has been a kind and indulgent papa to me."

"I hope he will like me, darling."

"Oh, I know he will. You will be content to wait till he comes?"

"Yes, though it is happiness deferred."

"Ah! Aaron, do you think you will always love me as now?"

"Always, darling!" And he pressed her to his bosom in the exuberance of his affection.

After this Miss Dubois was much at the store, and, in her playful happy way, she assisted in the postoffice, which was a square room partitioned off, in one corner of the building.

And so the days went on and Aaron Huntley was certainly the happiest man in the village. But one morning a thunder-clap fell upon him. He went to his store, and found the rear door ajar. He went to his safe and found that it had been opened, and the money taken—the savings of years.

In anticipation of his marriage, Mr. Huntley had thought of purchasing a house, and had drawn five thousand dollars from the bank in a neighboring town for that purpose. Then he had three thousand dollars laid aside for the purchase of goods for the fall trade; and in addition to this there had been about two thousand dollars of government money in his keeping. It was just at the close of a postal quarter, and the post-masters of several adjacent villages, having no safes of their own, had entrusted their returns to his hands. So that full ten thousand dollars had been stolen from the safe.

For a time Huntley was like one distracted, but he had sense enough to make his loss known at once to the deputy sheriff, and the officer, with a posse was soon on the search. In the outset the searchers had no possible clue. Both the lock of the door and the lock of the safe must have been picked by skillful hands, or neither of them was injured in the least.

Miss Dubois was early at the store, and when she heard of her lover's loss she endeavored to console him.

"Don't worry, dearest," she said. "When my father comes I can help you. If this loss cripples you, it shall only be for a time."

"But, Clara, I would not have it appear that I married you for your—"

"Naughty man, hush! Will you not let me love you a little?"

"What could he say more?"

Evening came, but not a trace of the burglar. The sheriff had hit two or three possible trails, but they had led to no success. On the morrow he would set forth again, hoping that, meantime, he might receive a favorable answer to some of the numerous telegrams he had sent off.

When the stage arrived that evening an old gentleman, with white hair and beard, and wearing an enormous pair of green spectacles, was helped out, leaning heavily upon his stout oaken staff, hobbled into the hall. He signed his name upon the register, in a tremulous, straggling hand: "Dr. Sam Bumpus, N. Y."

When the ten-bell sounded, he stood in the hall and watched while the guests entered the supper room. The landlady came to wait upon him.

On the next instant Miss Dubois had a pistol in her hand, and was cocking it; but the man in the chair, and the man at the door, had both been watchful of her. They were upon her before she could do any mischief, and after a sharp, furious struggle—a struggle which two strong men had hard work to do—a pair of ratchet irons were upon her wrists.

Mr. Huntley for the second time that day had been thunder-struck—so completely struck that all power of defending his promised wife was lost to him, and he did not even recover his power of speech until the ignoble irons had been snapped upon her wrists.

"In the name of mercy," he at length gasped, "why do you treat a lady thus?"

"A lady! That's good! Say, you are Aaron Huntley, ain't ye?"

"Yes, sir."

"And was robbed last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I am Captain Joyce, of the New York detective force, and this fair companion of yours has been giving me considerable of a waltz lately, as he can tell you."

"He?"

"Yes, sir.—He. Didn't you ever hear of one John Rupert, otherwise called Liverpool Jack?"

"I have read in the papers of a big reward having been offered for Liverpool Jack," answered Mr. Huntley, wonderingly.

"Well, returned Captain Joyce, "here we have him, as large as life, and he would be full as natural if it wasn't for his feminine masquerade. O, he's a keen one, he is sir; but I fancy we'll sing him a song of Sing Sing now, and if I ain't greatly out, we'll find your lost money for you."

And so Aaron Huntley lost a wife, but he regained his ten thousand dollars, though it was a long, long time, before he regained anything of his old pride and self-complacency; for he had, indeed, for four weeks, been wasting the love of his tender heart upon one of the most accomplished rogues that ever crossed the Atlantic.—N. Y. Ledger.

Poetry.

German Love Song.

Thou art the rest, the languor sweet;
Thou art the dream, the blissful retreat;
I consecrate my heart to thee,
Thy home through all eternity!

Come to me, and shut the door
So that no one can enter more;
Fill all my soul with dear delight;
Oh, tarry with me day and night!

—Harper for October.

Miscellany

MY WATCH.

BY MARK TWAIN.

My beautiful new watch had run eighteen months without losing or gaining, and without breaking any part of its machinery or stopping. I had come to believe it infallible in its judgments about the time of day, and to consider its constitution and anatomy imperishable. But at last, one night, I let it run down. I grieved about it as it were a recognized messenger and forerunner of calamity. But by-and-by I cheered up, set the watch by guess, and commanded my boding and superstitious to depart. Next day I stepped into the chief jeweler's to set it by the exact time, and the head of the establishment took it out of my hand and proceeded to set it for me. Then he said, "she is four minutes slow—regular watches pushing up." I tried to stop him—tried to make him understand that the watch kept perfect time. But no; all this human cabbage could see, was that the watch was four minutes slow, and the regulator must be pushed up a little—and so while I danced around him in anguish, and beseeched him to let the watch alone, he calmly and cruelly did the shameful deed. My watch began to gain.

It gained faster and faster day by day. Within the week it sickened to a raging fever, and its pulse went up to a hundred and fifty in the shade.

At the end of two months it had left all the timepieces of the town far in the rear, and was a fraction over thirteen days ahead of the almanac. It was away into November enjoying the snow, while the October leaves were still turning. It

hurried up house rent, bills payable, and such things, in such a ruinous way that I could not abide it. I took it to the watchmaker to be regulated. He asked me if I had ever had it repaired. I said no—it never needed any repairing. He looked a look of vicious happiness and eagerly priced the watch open, then put a small dice box into his eye and peered into its machinery. He said it wanted cleaning and oiling, besides regulating—come in a week. After being cleaned and oiled and regulated, my watch slowed down to that degree that it ticked like a tolling bell. I began to be left by trains, I failed all appointments, I got to missing my dinner; my watch strung out three days' grace to four, and let me go to protest; I gradually drifted back into yesterday, then day before, then into last week, and by-and-by the comprehension came upon me that, all solitary and alone, I was lingering along in week before last, and the world was out of my sight. I seemed to detect in myself a sort of sneaking fellowship for the mummy in the museum, and a desire to swap news with him. I went to a watchmaker again. He took the watch all to pieces while I waited, and then said the barrel was "swelled." He said he could reduce it in three days.

After this the watch averaged well; but nothing more. For half a day it would go like the very mischief, and keep up such barking and wheezing and whooping and sneezing and snorting, that I could not hear myself think for the disturbance; and as long as it held out, there was not a watch in the land that stood any chance against it. But the rest of the day in would keep on slowing down and fooling along until all the clocks it had left behind had caught up again. So at last, at the end of twenty-four hours it would trot up to the judge's stand all right and just on time. It would show a fair and square average, and no man could say that it had done more or less than its duty. But a correct average is only a mild virtue in a watch, and I took this instrument to another watchmaker. He said the kingbolt was broken. I said I was glad it was nothing more serious. To tell the plain truth, I had no idea what the kingbolt was, but I did not choose to appear ignorant to a stranger.

He repaired the kingbolt, but what the watch gained in one way it lost in another. It would run awhile and then stop awhile, and then run awhile again, and so on, using its own discretion about the intervals. And every time it went off it kicked back like a mule.

I padded my breast for a few days, but finally took the watch to another watchmaker. He picked it all to pieces, and turned the ruin all over and under his glass; he then said there appeared to be something the matter with the hair trigger. He fixed it and gave it a fresh start. It did well now, except that always at ten minutes to ten the hands would shut together like a pair of scissors, and from that time forth they would travel together. The oldest man in the world could not make head nor tail of the time of the day by such a watch, so I went again to have the thing repaired. This person said that the crystal had got bent, and that the mainspring was not straight—He also remarked that part of the works needed halt soling. He made these things all right, and then my time-piece performed unexceptionably, save now and then, after working along quietly for nearly eight hours, everything inside would let go all of a sudden and begin to buzz like a bee, and the hands would straightway begin to spin round and round so fast that their individuality was lost completely, and they simply seemed a delicate spider's web over the face of the watch. She would reel off the next twenty-four hours in six or seven minutes, and then stop with a bang.

I went with a heavy heart to one more watchmaker, and looked on while he took her to pieces. Then I prepared to cross-question him rightly, for this thing was getting serious. The watch had cost two hundred dollars originally, and I seemed to have paid out two thousand for repairs. While I waited and looked on, I presently recognized in this watchmaker an old acquaintance—a steamboat engineer of other days, and not a good engineer either. He examined all the parts carefully just as all the other watchmakers had done, and then delivered his verdict with the same confidence of manner.

He said:

"She makes too much steam—you want to take the monkey wrench on the safety-valve."

I brained him on the spot, and had him buried at my own expense.

My uncle William (now deceased, alas!) used to say that a good horse was a good horse until it had run away once, and that a good watch was a good watch until the repairs got a chance at it. And he used to wonder what became of all the unsuccessful tinkers, and gunsmiths, and blacksmiths; and nobody could ever tell him.

A Hero.

The story I am going to tell you to-night, children, is about a hero. I know boys like to hear about such men, and girls too, for that matter. But this hero of mine wasn't a Greek or a Roman. He didn't go to Palestine to fight for the holy sepulcher, in the middle ages. He didn't fight even in our own war. He wasn't even a man. "What was he then?" somebody says.

Why, he was just a little black boy and he lived on a cotton plantation, ten miles down the river from Memphis in Tennessee, before the war.

A little girl twelve years old, kept a journal the first winter she spent in the South. I was reading it over this morning. That is how I came to think of this story. Nannie shall tell it as she wrote it in her book, only first you'll want to know what my hero was like. His name was Sid, and he was a foster-brother of Jessie, Nannie's cousin. Jessie was thirteen and Sid a year older. He had the roughest, blackest, merriest face you ever saw, and he loved to play, and ride, and swim, anything but work, better than any boy you ever heard of, and that is saying a good deal. He could run faster, and stand on his head longer than any other boy. At least half of the time was spent in working out punishment for some piece of mischief he had led the rest into; but he would stand on his head afterward, "to let his feelings run in," he said, and was the next minute ready for whatever came next. This is what Nannie says:

It did seem so funny when first I got here, to have a little black girl always to wait upon me upstairs and downstairs all over the plantation, and even to sleep curled up in a blanket on the floor by my bed. Well, he was one, and he was too, and Jessie and Ben have each little boys. You can get used to anything, and now I like Molly very much. They play with us, too. Uncle says that all the five together are good for is to help on our mischief, and I suppose that we do a good deal of that, at least Aunt Sally the nurse says we are awful romps, and I haven't a dress without a tear in it, from climbing trees.

We have a play house down by the river. There is a bridge that the railroad runs on, just a little further down, and a long trestle-work that goes clear across the cotton field, and around a corner into the woods. The river isn't very deep now. The boys wade every day, but there are big stones in it, and they are all covered. Our play house is under the great sycamore trees.

Sometimes when the boys are very good they play with us, and they are doctors and school teachers and strict fathers. Sometimes when they want play with us they just go off and leave us alone. But once in a while they stay around and say disagreeable things, and throw sticks in the water, and get everything all wet; and if we can't drive them away, we have to go back to the house, while they sit on the bridge and scream after us.

Uncle Isaac don't like to have them sit on the bridge and has told them not to. When they do it of course that makes them feel wicked, so they plague us.

Uncle has a Sunday-school for all the children on the plantation, we are so far from the church. All the black people come too. In pleasant weather we meet on one of the piazzas. The Sunday before Easter, uncle had been talking to us for a long time, but no one was tired. He was telling us how Christ had come down from Heaven to die for us, as well as other people and the servants, even little baby Sukie, who was crawling down the steps after a butterfly. "Christ died in our stead," When he had said that he took hold of Sid's chin, and looking into his face, said very solemnly, "Sid, do you know that the dear Lord died for you too?" Sid always had to stand by uncle before service was half over. It was the only place he ever kept out of mischief. That day he had made a rabbit out of Jessie's pocket handkerchief, and when uncle was talking to him it was hanging out of his pocket by a string tied to its tail.

"Guess not, massa. I've no account nigger."

"Yes you are, Sid, in His eyes of some account, and he was willing to die in your stead, that you might go to Heaven if you try to be a good boy. Do you know what it is to die in any one's stead? If Jessie had done something wrong that he would have to be punished for, something that he might even have to die for, and you were to say, 'I haven't done this wicked thing; I know it was wrong, but I love my master so much I would rather be killed and have him live'; that would be dying in his stead. Do you deserve that? He should have done so?"

Sid didn't say anything, but he looked very sober, and after service he had to turn somersets clear across the lawn down to the white gate before he was ready to laugh as much as usual.

But he must have remembered. The next Saturday we were down at our play house, Jessie was fishing, sitting on the bridge, and he knew he ought not to be there, for he made Sid watch to see if uncle came into the field.

Of course if Jessie had minded, such an awful thing would never have happened; and how much he did wish afterward he had, but what good did that do, just to wish he had done right when it had all happened.

The supper-horn blew, and we began to pick up our things. It was a long time after that, though, when I, first of all, climbed up the bank with a load of doll's chairs. Just as I got to the top I heard a whistle, and I saw Sid throw up his arms, and start to rush to the end of the bridge. The train was coming.

"Jessie! Jessie!" I screamed, and we all did, "the train's coming! Run! run!" But he must have been awfully frightened, for he only stood still and looked toward the woods, and we could see the

